

Craighead Environmental Research Institute

Monthly Progress Report: May, 2008

for the Montana Department of Transportation and Western
Transportation Institute

Bozeman Pass Wildlife Monitoring

MSU banner number 426899

1 May 2008 – 30 May 2008

Task 1: Road Kill Surveys during May 2008

Road kill surveys were conducted between Bozeman and Jackson Creek. Surveys were conducted on both sides of I-90 from Bozeman to Jackson Creek and back for a total of 22 miles round trip and an estimated 1 hour of labor per survey. Thirteen (13) road-kill surveys were driven during May of 2008. Two (2) of those recorded no new road-kill. This equals 286 miles driven in April for this subcontract. Totals of animals killed between Bozeman and Livingston were:

Bozeman Pass Roadkill Totals	May
Species	Number
Badger	0
Beaver	5
Bobcat	0
Bird Spp.	0
Black Bear	0
Cowbird	0
Coyote	1
Deer species	3
Dog	0
Domestic cat	0
Elk	0
Great Horned Owl	0
Ground Squirrel	0
Hungarian (Gray) Partridge	0
Long-eared Owl	0
Magpie	1
Mallard	0
Marmot	1
Meadowlark	0

Mink	0
Moose	0
Mule Deer	0
Pigeon	0
Porcupine	1
Rabbit	2
Raccoon	1
Red Fox	0
Ruffed Grouse	1
Snowshoe Hare	0
Skunk	2
Small mammal spp.	0
Weasel	0
White Tail Deer	6

Task 2: Track bed monitoring at the MRL Bridge in May 2008

Spring conditions finally allowed track bed sessions to start in the beginning of May. Three track bed sessions were completed. One whitetailed deer was found dead underneath the MRL bridge near the track bed in early May; it may have been killed on the highway and knocked off the bridge, or killed by a train.

Task 3: Photo monitoring at fence ends through May 2008

Cameras were downloaded during May. Batteries for all remote cameras were operational. The small locks that keep the RECONYX cameras shut were rusted closed when we attempted to download at the end of April.

Task 4: Infrared counter monitoring at jump-outs through May 2008

The Trailmaster sensors are often triggered by false events and adjustment of counter sensitivity settings has been unable to make them reliable. We decided to remove the sensors during the middle part of May.

Task 5: Track bed monitoring at fence ends, jump-outs through May 2008

We began to monitor the fence ends and jump-outs during May. One whitetailed deer was found dead inside the fence on the slope above the SE jumpout. It was apparently killed by a vehicle collision and dropped down the slope where it was out of site from the highway; it was probably killed in April, but was discovered in May.

Task 6: Photo monitoring of culverts May 2008

Due to the high run-off in Rocky Creek, the culvert cameras were not downloaded in May. Batteries for all remote cameras were replaced at the end of October and should last through the winter. High water in the culverts will preclude downloading until late May or June.

Task 7: Opportunistic snow tracking at track bed, fence ends, jump-outs, and along the Interstate in May 2008.

Weather conditions have changed so that we are no longer conducting snow tracking at the track bed, fence ends and jump-outs.

Task 8: Data Management & Reporting in April 2008

Data entry and summary required two hours during May.

Discussion:

Data and observations from May indicate that the fencing is not 100% effective at keeping animals off the road surface in the study area. At least one whitetailed deer was killed inside the fence. There is a possibility that a second one was killed on the bridge, but there is no way to tell for certain. Still, the rate of roadkill has declined dramatically within the fenced-in study area.